

**Recent Trends in
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in Asia**

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Recent Trends in International Migration in Asia

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PREFACE

The Programme of Action adopted at the International Conference on Population and Development, held at Cairo in September 1994, stressed the need for improved data and information on international migration. It recommended that "In cooperation with international and non-governmental organizations and research institutions, Governments should support the gathering of data on flows and stocks of international migrants and on factors causing migration, as well as the monitoring of international migration. The identification of strategies to ensure that migration contributes to development and international relations should also be supported. The role of international organizations with mandates in the area of migration should be strengthened so that they can deliver adequate technical support to developing countries, advise in the management of international migration flows and promote inter-governmental cooperation through, *inter alia*, bilateral and multilateral negotiations, as appropriate." (Recommendation 10.8).

The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), at its fifty-first session, called upon the secretariat to further its work on monitoring and research in the population-related areas of reproductive health, the family, ageing and international migration.

In response to these mandates, the secretariat of ESCAP commissioned this study to review the major recent trends in international migration in Asia and to suggest policy recommendations.

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INTRODUCTION

Migration in the form of temporary exploration for the possibility of earning a livelihood or establishing a new settlement has been observed historically and is a timeless phenomenon. In recent centuries, migration for the purpose of establishing a new residence occurred when Europeans migrated to America, Australia and Africa. Similarly, labour migration was seen in the forms of the slave trade, then corvée labour, and finally contract labour from Africa and Asia to Europe and America. Migration of Africans as slaves to America and Europe was seen during the 17th and 18th centuries while Asians from India and China migrated in the 19th and 20th centuries as corvée and contract labourers.

A more recent phenomenon is mass contract labour to the Persian Gulf region. The pattern is distinguished from earlier migrations which were often motivated by a desire to establish permanent or long-term residence abroad. Migration to the Persian Gulf region since the 1970s has mostly been on a temporary basis, with no possibility of settlement. In the past, whether their reasons for migration were economic or political, migrants usually moved with the intention of bringing their families at a later date and thus formed small migrant communities in the host countries, establishing a diaspora. But most current migrants to the Persian Gulf region have no prospects for settlement. They usually maintain close relations with families at home, where they return after completing their employment contracts.

During the 1980s there was a shift of migrant workers to work in Japan and the newly industrializing economies in Asia, including Hong Kong, Taiwan Province of China, and Singapore. Because of the decline in the birth rate, the growth rates of these areas are much lower than two decades ago and, together with the rapid growth of economic activities in Asia, have created a great demand for both male and female labour. These areas have encouraged migration to help abate the labour shortage.

A trend toward labour shortage is indeed being recognized in other areas in Asia, such as Brunei Darussalam and Malaysia, and more recently Thailand. The success of the family planning programmes in some countries such as Thailand and the small population size in Malaysia and Brunei Darussalam, together with the rapid economic growth during the

past few years, indicate that these countries will be importing labour, despite the fact that Malaysia and Thailand are also exporting labour at the moment. The incidence of brain drain and illegal immigration are evident and proper policies and plans will have to be identified and implemented.

To understand migration patterns more clearly, some scholars have classified migration and agreed upon a typology as follows: (1) permanent settlers, including persons admitted under family reunion schemes; (2) temporary contract workers, normally semi-skilled or unskilled persons who remain in the receiving country for finite periods, often two years; (3) temporary professional transients, professional or skilled workers who move from one country to another usually as employees of international and/or joint-venture companies; (4) clandestine or illegal workers whose entry may or may not be sanctioned by the receiving government; (5) asylum seekers who cross borders and appeal for status on grounds of political discrimination; and (6) refugees as defined by the 1951 United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees (Appleyard, 1992b:253).

This paper will focus on types 2, 3, and 4 more than the other three because it will concentrate on the migration of the last two decades composed mostly of non-settlers and non-political migrants. When possible, the paper will discuss males and females separately as most male migrants are construction labourers of different skills whereas most female migrants work in the service sector as housemaids and entertainers. The host countries also vary. Fewer female than male migrants work in the Persian Gulf countries while both males and females work in other Asian countries.

I. MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT IN ASIA

The relationship between migration and development is complex and no simple explanation can facilitate understanding of the migration and development process. Appleyard observes that there is a tendency for scholars to identify themselves with one of two schools of thought: the classical economics school and the conflict school. The former adopts functional, value-oriented equilibrium models that treat migration as a voluntary and rational calculation by individuals who seek to enhance their economic position by responding to wages offered in the modern industrial sector in foreign cities. The latter argue that migration cannot be conceived principally as the calculated result of self-interested individuals which in turn results in an equilibrium between resources and production factors, but is to be understood and analyzed in the context of class structure and conflict (Appleyard, 1992b:257).

Scholars who employ macro-economic analytical tools demonstrate the relationship between the migration transition and macro-economic phenomena, including structural transformation, trade performance, and export growth. In the introduction of the special issue of the *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal* on Turning Points in Labor Migration, Abella (1994b: 2-3) observed that Deepak Nayyar used a rigorous theoretical formulation to show how the migration transition occurred as a consequence of structural transformation. Remittances sent home were considered a variable of the trade theory framework (Nayyar, 1994). Florian Albuero (1994) sought to find a connection between trade performance and turning points in migration. He attempted to validate the theory by examining in detail the historical record of trade, especially exports, and migration in selected Asian countries. Gary Fields (1994) studied labour markets and how a stimulus such as the growth of exports would be transmitted to higher wages. He showed that increases in wages and economic conditions in the sending country are sufficient to bring about an eventual transition.

In the same issue, Pang Eng Fong took a more comprehensive and inter-disciplinary approach, which he termed an eclectic approach, and constructed a stylized historical model of the migration transition which brings together economic, demographic, and social variables that shape and determine when the turning points in migration

would take place (Pang, 1994b). In studying the turning point of labour flows, it is generally agreed that as an economy develops and offers more job opportunities, the first turning point is reached when the rate of net outflows slows to match the rate of labour force growth. After the first turning point, sectoral shortages begin to be felt in construction and agriculture. Processes of industrialization and structural change can also explain the pattern of the migration transition.

II. MIGRATION TO THE MIDDLE EAST

A. Labour demand in the Middle East

The most important postwar economic change in the Persian Gulf region was its development as the world's premier regional petroleum producer and exporter. When the Second World War ended, United States of America and Venezuelan production could not satisfy the demand for oil in Europe and Japan, where reconstruction needs were great. Oil from the Persian Gulf region was produced to meet this demand. Western companies that developed oil production dominated all industrial operations. The companies controlled production, refining and marketing and they ensured themselves ample supplies and generous profits. Concessional arrangements in the 1950s allowed more revenue to accrue to producing nations through fifty-fifty profit-sharing agreements. In the 1970s, oil companies undertook joint ventures with government companies set up for that purpose. During the 1970s, the petroleum industry began to undergo nationalization, but downstream operations, especially transportation and marketing, remained under the oil majors' control. The shift in control of the oil industry during the 1970s brought about changes in employment patterns and national development policies in many of the oil-rich countries.

In the 1950s and 1960s, when Western companies still controlled the oil industry, proportionately minimal benefits went to the Middle Eastern and South-West Asian countries. The oil industry employed few indigenous workers. Those that were hired were heavily concentrated in non-managerial positions. Up to the mid-1970s, oil power existed but it was mainly in corporate hands. During the 1970s, after nationalization of the oil industry, the production giants – Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Libya, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Bahrain and Oman – were overwhelmingly dependent on petroleum as a source of national wealth. Furthermore, with small demand on their energy, they became oil exporters, and with small populations, they became countries with high per capita incomes.

The impact of oil in low population, high production countries was regional as well as international. Besides foreign aid, oil States provided jobs for workers from poorer Arab countries, for Palestinians, and for

Asians. Remittances provided significant foreign exchange for the workers' home countries. While Palestinians and Egyptians often held skilled and managerial positions, other foreign workers were likely to get lower-level work.

The Persian Gulf city-states employed foreigners in social services, the tourist and hotel trades, general clerical positions, construction, education, and skilled and unskilled labour. While the oil industry itself employed few workers, the revenues it generated opened up new employment opportunities. For the workers, the hope of earning a better living in the oil countries usually materialized, though occasionally it did not, especially for illegal entrants. Recruits discovered that living and working conditions could be less than ideal. Governments and oil companies did not have to provide guest workers with the same benefits given to their own nationals. This workforce could easily be expelled. Nevertheless, labour migration spread oil wealth to citizens of poorer countries in the region, expanding the lower middle classes but also increasing aspirations and expectations.

Because of the low population size of the oil-rich countries, the number of Asian migrant workers increased and reached its peak in the early 1980s. One reason for the high demand for Asian workers was that they were more politically acceptable to the host countries; they could be managed more easily within a temporary enclave that would tend to ensure the return home of the migrants.

The Persian Gulf war in 1990-1991 had had a very obvious impact on labour migrants in the region. Migrants were returned home in large numbers. It took approximately one year for most countries to resume economic activities at the level that existed prior to the war.

According to Stalker (1994:239) the Persian Gulf States have some of the highest concentrations of migrant workers in the world. With only 0.4 per cent of the world's population, in 1990 they held 13 per cent of the world's migrant population. The six States which make up the Gulf Cooperation Council – Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates – had over 5 million migrant workers. Iraq had about 1.3 million.

While Chuocri divided the migration flows to the Persian Gulf into five distinct phases, Stalker added a sixth phase after 1990, and stated that since 1945 the sources and volumes of workers have moved through a number of different phases as follows:

1. 1945-1973 – Traditional migratory movements between Arab States. About 85 per cent of migrants came from other Arab States. There was relatively little control over immigration. The current migration system started to take place in the early 1960s and continues to the present.
2. 1974-1975 – Rapid expansion in immigration from other Arab States. The 1973 oil price rises triggered an explosive growth in investment and generated an enormous demand for labour, largely for construction and services.
3. 1976-1979 – Large-scale flows from non-Arab countries. The Arab countries could no longer supply sufficient migrants. Employers were having to look further for labour supply from other regions.
4. 1980-1984 – Greater control and more diverse flows. Sources of labour became more diverse and governments began to intervene in the recruitment process. Growth in employment of non-nationals started to slow down.
5. 1985-1990 – Reduction in revenue and stabilization of immigration. With the decline in oil prices, and greater concern about the number of foreigners, the growth in immigration continued more slowly. Fewer workers were needed for construction but there was a rising demand for service workers.
6. Since 1990 – The Persian Gulf war of 1990-1991 and the aftermath. More than 2 million people left Kuwait and Iraq because of the conflict. Many of the workers have since returned, but a number of nationalities are no longer welcome and the balance of nationalities in the migrant workforce has been significantly altered.

B. Labour supply from Asian countries

The Persian Gulf needs foreign workers partly because of the small size of the national populations and the sudden development tasks identified after the oil price rise in 1973. Furthermore, national populations were reluctant to do some work, they preferred traditional rural practices and were not ready to join a more modern economy. Table 1 shows number of immigrant workers in the Persian Gulf region from 1975 to 1990.

Table 1. Immigrant workers in the Persian Gulf region, 1975-1990 (number of non-national workers and percentage of total labour force)

	1975		1980		1985		1990	
	000s	%	000s	%	000s	%	000s	%
Saudi Arabia	475	32	1 734	59	2 662	65	2 878	60
United Arab Emirates	234	84	471	90	612	90	805	89
Kuwait	218	70	393	78	552	81	731	86
Oman	103	54	171	59	336	69	442	70
Qatar	57	83	106	88	157	90	230	92
Bahrain	39	46	78	57	101	58	132	51
Total	1 125	47	2 953	65	4 417	70	5 218	68

Source: Stalker, 1994:241, from Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia data.

Stalker indicates that of the workers reported in table 1, the majority of Asian workers came initially from India and Pakistan. In 1975, they accounted for about 95 per cent of the total stock of Asians in the Middle East. South-East and East Asian countries took a steadily larger share, so that by 1989 they were making up more than half the annual flows. This was because many of the large American construction companies had previously built airports and other military and civil installations in Viet Nam and Thailand during the Viet Nam war. They had used the services of labour contractors in the Philippines, the Republic of Korea and Thailand. Later, when they took on Persian Gulf construction contracts, they turned to the same contractors for their workers. The flows from Asia have also increased because of the demand for female domestic workers. They made up around 20 per cent of the region's foreign workforce. The largest sources of domestic workers were Sri Lanka, Indonesia and the Philippines.

Abella (1992) felt that labour migration and the total expatriate workforce did not decline, as the number of service workers from Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Indonesia and the Philippines progressively grew at the same time that the number of construction workers declined. There was also some evidence of the "hoarding" of labour in anticipation of an upturn, which was eased by a downward adjustment in real wages prior to the Persian Gulf crisis.

Most of the labour-exporting countries were undergoing economic structural changes, shifting from an agricultural subsistence, local market economy to an agro-industrial and trade economy. Many of the agriculturalists found themselves unable to cope with the situation when their agricultural produce depended on world market prices and when prices fluctuated irrationally beyond their control. The landless became wage labourers but found themselves unable to find employment at home.

The worldwide economic recession of the 1970s was one factor which initiated emigration of Asian workers to the Persian Gulf region, where labour demand was high and economic compensation was very attractive. The pioneers proved that monetary returns were very attractive and motivated others to follow.

The first oil price rise in 1973 produced a foreign exchange crisis as well as many other economic problems for many Asian countries. In Thailand, the end of the Viet Nam war and the removal of the United States bases from Thailand left many skilled and semi-skilled workers unemployed. Many of the multinational construction firms shifted their activities from Thailand to the Persian Gulf region. Data from a United Nations University (UNU) survey indicated that the first groups of migrants went from Lampang, Nakhon Ratchasima and Udon Thani provinces, where the United States bases were located. They were employed by multinational firms. The high demand for Asian workers in the Middle East attracted large volumes of migrants (Pongsapich, 1991).

In the early years there was relatively little control over immigration, particularly from Arab countries. Indian and Pakistani workers at that time found it relatively easy to enter and bring family members to join them. However, the Governments usually insisted that migrants were guest workers and not settlers; they were excluded from social benefits and were under strict control by the host Governments.

Asian labour continued to flow in large numbers to the Persian Gulf countries despite the decline in real wages following the recession in the early 1980s. Abella (1993) reported that in the initial stages of an upswing, supply was inelastic owing to lack of information, lack of the right kinds of skills, and bureaucratic inefficiencies. Formalization of Asian labour supplies took different forms for South Asia and East Asia. Labour from India and Pakistan was supplied by recruitment agents, while that from East Asia was project-tied migration. Traditionally, kinship ties played an important role in labour recruitment, but because of the sudden increase in demand for labour after the oil price escalation, commercial interests dominated and replaced kinship networks in the migration process in South Asia.

Project-tied migration offered a way to bring in large labour forces from East Asia on temporary arrangements. Migrant labourers were rotated and returned to their countries after the project was terminated. During the latter phase of migration to the Persian Gulf region, East Asian labourers depended upon recruitment agents for job arrangements and faced different forms of abuses and exploitation. Policy makers in countries of origin then developed policies to control recruitment agents and minimize exploitation.

Most Asian workers are recruited under a one-year or two-year contract. They are not allowed to change their job, must ask permission from their employers to leave the country, are not allowed to join trade unions or strike, and are under tight control of the sponsors. It is common practice for the sponsors or employers to seize the worker's travel documents. Many of these workers feel trapped and that their rights have been taken away. Female domestic workers especially feel being abused. In recent years, many of them fled to take refuge in their country's embassy. Stalker (1994:245) reported that in 1991, the Government of Kuwait repatriated 850 female domestic workers from the Philippines who had fled employers and, in 1992, repatriated another 350.

As the labour market contracted, male workers faced a similar destiny in many cases. Some arrived to find that they had no job or one very different from that promised and at a much lower wage. Working conditions were often harsh, with long working hours and low pay. It has been observed that there has been a downward trend in wages and other fringe benefits over the last decade. This is attributed to the greater competition among labour-exporting countries, the emergence of new sources of labour supply and the increasing role of middlemen and brokers in both sending and receiving countries. There are also differences in wages paid to nationals of different countries for similar jobs and qualifications. Asian migrants later learned that their earnings may not cover the investment made to come to the Persian Gulf countries, especially with the high recruitment cost. Hence, there was a shift to migrate to other Asian countries.

In reviewing the occupational and skill profile of migrant workforces, Piyasiri Wickramasekara (1994) made the comment that, despite the generally accepted shift in demand towards service workers and professional workers following the initial construction boom, the data do not indicate a consistent pattern. More than half of the outflow from India and Pakistan is still unskilled workers. In the case of the Philippines, the share of production and related workers in total migration had

declined from a level of 64 per cent in 1980 to 33 per cent in 1991. This reflects a sharp decline in the unskilled and semi-skilled categories. For Bangladesh, the share of skilled workers seems to have declined between 1981 and 1991, from 40 per cent to 27 per cent, with a corresponding rise in the semi-skilled group from 4 per cent to 16 per cent. In the case of India, there was some increase in the skilled categories. Pakistan is the opposite of Bangladesh, with a significant increase in the skilled category. The Sri Lankan migration stream is still dominated by the low-skill housemaids category. Given the high level of education in Sri Lanka, as in the Philippines, this trend is difficult to explain. Indonesian migration is characterized by emigration of mostly less educated, relatively unskilled workers (Wickramasekera, 1994:12).

Data from some Middle Eastern countries showing occupational distributions are presented in table 2. The figures show that there was only a marginal difference in occupational distribution between the United Arab Emirates and Kuwait. Saudi Arabia, however, has fewer service workers and more production workers. From the early 1980s up to 1992, only marginal changes have been observed, which confirms the general observation that there has been only a slow shift in the share of unskilled workers.

Table 2. Occupational distribution of non-national labour force in selected Middle East countries in 1992

<i>Occupational group</i>	<i>(percentage)</i>		
	<i>United Arab Emirates</i>	<i>Saudi Arabia</i>	<i>Kuwait</i>
Professional/technical	12.7	14.4	10.5
Administrative/managerial	1.0	1.5	1.3
Clerical/related work	10.6	2.4	10.4
Sales	8.0	5.8	6.6
Service	22.9	6.2	28.8
Agriculture/related work	7.8	15.8	2.2
Production/labourers	37.8	53.9	40.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
(Total number)	776 800	3 274 410	520 778

Source: Wickramasekera, 1995:12.

Wickramasekara (1994) feels that demand for labour from the Middle East will depend on a number of factors: trend in oil revenues; growth trends; expansion of the national labour force; policies towards foreign labour, etc. Most Middle East countries have proclaimed a policy of localization of labour over the medium to long term. Awad (1993) has made some projections of demand for labour in the Middle East and showed that the rate of growth of migrant labour to the Middle East is expected to decrease in the year 2000.

Table 3 shows the projections made by Awad. He has projected total numbers under a scenario of low growth. In the year 2000, the demand for labour would be in the range of 5.7 million for the three countries. Although the predicted increase in numbers between 1994 and 2000 is less than three per cent per year, migrant workers would remain a majority of the labour force in these countries. The major sectors include services, trade, hotels and restaurants, and construction.

Table 3. Projections of demand for migrant labour in selected Middle East countries

	<i>United Arab Emirates</i>	<i>Saudi Arabia</i>	<i>Kuwait</i>
Year 1994			
Demand, migrant labour, 000s	544	3 721	609
Total labour force, 000s	684	5 876	733
Migrant labour (% of total)	79.5	63.3	83.1
Year 2000			
Demand, migrant labour, 000s	792	4 196	690
Total labour force, 000s	1 008	6 755	852
Migrant labour (% of total)	78.6	62.1	81.0

Source: Wickramasekara, 1995:14.

III. INTRAREGIONAL MIGRATION

With the decrease in labour demand in the Middle East, the preference for local nationals, and the higher demand for labour in East Asian countries, the pattern of labour flows gradually shifted. Table 4 shows figures of migrants from selected Asian countries. The figures indicate that for most countries, out-migration reached a peak in 1981,

Table 4. Annual outflow of contract migrant workers by country of origin, 1969-1991

(in thousands)

	South Asia				South-East and East Asia			
	Bangla- desh	India	Pakis- tan	Sri Lanka	Indo- nesia	Republic of Korea	Philip- pines	Thai- land
1969							3.7	
1970							1.9	
1971			3.5				1.9	
1972			4.5				14.4	
1973			12.3				26.4	0.3
1974			16.3			14.5	32.7	
1975			23.1			21.0	36.0	1.0
1976	6.1	4.2	41.7	1.2	1.9	47.7	47.8	1.3
1977	15.7	22.9	140.5	12.5	2.9	69.6	70.4	3.9
1978	22.8	69.0	130.5	17.7	8.2	102.0	88.2	14.7
1979	24.5	171.8	125.5	25.9	10.4	121.0	137.3	10.6
1980	30.6	236.3	129.8	28.6	16.2	146.4	2 14.6	21.5
1981	55.8	276.0	168.4	57.4	17.9	175.1	255.2	26.7
1982	62.8	239.5	142.9	22.5	21.1	196.6	314.3	108.5
1983	59.2	225.0	128.2	18.1	29.0	187.8	434.2	68.5
1984	56.8	206.0	100.4	15.7	37.9	152.7	425.1	75.0
1985	77.7	163.0	88.5	12.4	56.7	120.2	389.2	69.7
1986	68.7	113.6	62.6	15.8	65.5	95.3	414.5	85.7
1987	74.0	125.4	69.6	16.1	59.4	86.3	496.9	85.5
1988	68.1	169.9	84.8	19.0	64.0	83.0	477.8	118.6
1989	101.7	126.8	126.8	24.7	84.7		523.0	125.3
1990	103.8	n.a.	113.8	42.6	86.2		446.1	63.0
1991	147.1	n.a.	142.8	65.0	124.7		615.0	n.a.

Source: Alburo, 1994:54-55.

1982, or 1983. After that the numbers fluctuated. For Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, and the Philippines, the number of migrants was highest in the last year shown, which is 1991. The Republic of Korea and Thailand passed the turning point and are now importing labour. The Republic of Korea has sent out few labourers after 1988 while Thailand both exports and imports workers.

Alburo observed that in 1988, the Republic Korea's place as the third leading source of export labour was taken by Thailand, although the decline in labour outflows from the former started as early as 1983. On the other hand, despite Indonesia's delayed entry into the contract labour market (starting only in the late 1970s), it was still able to capture a large portion of the job quotas for workers in estates, construction and domestic services. In 1991, the country posted an outflow exceeding 100,000. Its competitors, the Philippines and Thailand, however, reached the 100,000 mark as early as 1979 and 1982, respectively. (Alburo, 1994:53).

Table 5 compares figures of labour migrants from selected Asian countries to the Middle East and Asia. The figures show that migration to the Middle East countries reached its peak in 1983 and has been declining since. The number of migrants to Asia increased steadily until 1988. The figures support the reports from most scholars that migrants shifted their destination from the Middle East to the newly industrializing economies in Asia after the declines in oil prices and labour demand in the Middle East in 1983.

Table 5. Total and percentage share of labour migrants from selected Asian countries to Middle East and Asian regions, 1976-1989

(in thousands)

	<i>Receiving regions</i>				<i>Total</i>	
	<i>Middle East</i>		<i>Asia</i>			
	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>
1976	83.9	52.5	19.3	12.1	159.7	99.9
1977	250.3	94.1	7.3	2.7	265.9	99.9
1978	299.4	93.7	11.6	3.6	319.5	100.0
1979	356.7	93.0	15.7	4.1	383.5	100.0
1980	461.9	93.2	23.2	4.7	495.5	100.0

(Continued)

Table 5 (continued)

(in thousands)

	<i>Receiving regions</i>				<i>Total</i>	
	<i>Middle East</i>		<i>Asia</i>			
	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>
1981	620.8	92.7	35.2	5.3	669.4	99.9
1982	923.3	91.4	55.7	5.5	1 009.8	100.1
1983	950.7	88.4	58.8	5.5	1 075.3	100.1
1984	795.8	89.6	69.0	7.8	888.1	100.0
1985	756.2	88.9	73.2	8.6	851.1	100.0
1986	632.5	84.5	90.7	12.1	748.5	99.9
1987	684.7	82.3	114.8	13.8	831.9	99.9
1988	766.2	81.5	129.4	13.8	939.8	100.0
1989	496.9	77.8	101.0	15.8	638.3	100.0

Source: Albuero, 1994:58-59.

- Notes:** (1) The term labour migrants refers to landbased workers and excludes seamen. Seamen as labour migrants are significant only for the Philippines and the Republic of Korea.
- (2) Only the sending countries listed in table 4 are included here.

There are no comprehensive or comparative surveys of migrant workers from different countries working in different industrial sectors or occupational groups. Table 6 provides aggregate figures of sectoral distribution of foreign labour in East Asia. The figures in this table are

Table 6. Sectoral distribution of foreign labour in East Asia

(per cent of total)

<i>Type of industry</i>	<i>Japan migrants (1985-90)</i>	<i>Japan pop. census (1990)</i>	<i>Taiwan Province of China</i>	<i>Republic of Korea</i>
Construction	9	7	64	39
Transport/communi.	5	3		
Manufacturing	33	45	36	45
Trade/services	53	45		16
Total	100	100	100	100

Source: Abella and Mori, 1994: 7.

not classified according to the same occupational distribution as presented in table 2 for the Middle East. However, comparing figures of the two tables may provide some idea on the different characteristics of migrants working in the two regions.

From table 6, it is clear that construction and manufacturing are the two sectors most dependent on foreign workers in Taiwan Province of China and the Republic of Korea. The Republic of Korea has passed the turning point and shifted from exporting labour to importing labour. As was seen in table 4, the Republic of Korea essentially stopped exporting labour after 1988. The figures also show that Japan depends on foreign workers mostly in the manufacturing and service sectors.

A. EAST ASIA

1. Japan

Despite the fact that Japan faced labour shortages during the first stage of its rapid growth between 1965 and 1975, Japan did not adopt a policy of importing foreign labour. Stalker states that the Japanese have long considered their country to be closed and self-contained. From 1640, it was cut off from the rest of the world for 200 years. However, in the early 1900s, many Japanese emigrated in search of a better life abroad. One stream went to the United States of America (living in California and Hawaii), and Canada. In the 1920s and 1930s other groups went to Brazil and Peru. By 1940 there were around half a million Japanese migrants and their descendants living in the Americas. Another stream of Japanese emigration went to other Asian areas, i.e., Republic of Korea, Taiwan Province of China and Manchuria. During the Second World War, between 1941 and 1945, about 4 million people were thought to have left Japan (Stalker, 1994:249). After the Second World War, migration flows were reversed. Japan attracted migrants from almost all other Asian countries. Migration became important to Japan's increasing trade and investment links with other Asian countries, especially the ones in South-East Asia. However, Japanese immigration policy prohibits the entry of low-level manpower. Beginning in 1985, the number of illegal foreign workers has risen from almost nil to an official estimate of 260,000 as of October 1992. Unofficial estimates place the figure as high as 500,000 (Stahl, 1993:350).

At the beginning of 1992, a survey by the Labour Ministry found that 55 per cent of service companies and 49 per cent of those in manufacturing reported shortages of labour. The Federation of Economic Organizations estimated that by the end of the century, the labour shortage will reach 5 million, or about 7 per cent of total labour demand.

Abella and Mori (1994) identified several types of labour migration into Japan. They are:

- (1) Inflow of entertainers from 1978 onwards, mostly females.
- (2) Male foreign workers into industrial employment, consisting mostly of Chinese, Koreans, Pakistanis, Bangladeshis, Iranians and Filipinos. They were engaged mainly for the 3D (dirty, dangerous and demanding) jobs. Most entered as tourists and overstayed their visas. These were supplemented by growing numbers of students in small service jobs.
- (3) Legalized employment of unskilled foreign workers of Japanese descent in medium and large industries. Through amendment of the Immigration Control Act in 1990, foreigners of Japanese descent were allowed to obtain work permits on a long-term basis. They are mainly from Brazil and Peru; numbers range around 150,000. Mori noted that as the first draft of the amendment was presented in March 1988, when the inflow of illegal migrant workers from China and South Asian countries such as Bangladesh and Pakistan had shown a dramatic increase, the reform was designed primarily to cope with the problem of illegal migrant workers (Mori, 1994:622). Wickramasekara (1994:20) feels that this measure reflected the concern of Japanese authorities to maintain some degree of ethnic and cultural homogeneity and is at the expense of possible Asian migration.

Table 7 supports clearly that the earlier wave of Asian workers differs from the later inflow. Until the middle of the 1980s most of the illegal foreign workers were women who worked as bar hostesses. In 1983-84 alone, more than 90 per cent of the illegal foreign workers were female. But since 1985, the share of male workers increased to become more than 80 per cent in 1990 (Goto, 1994:62-63).

There has been a persistent shortage of labour in Japan since the 1960s and 1970s, when economic growth in Japan started to rise rapidly. The causes are partly demographic, as the birth rate was dropping and

Table 7. Japan: illegal foreign workers and entry refusals (000's)

Year	Total	Illegal foreign workers		Entry refusals Total
		Male	Female	
1983	2 339	200	2 139	1 377
1984	4 783	350	4 433	1 314
1985	5 629	687	4 942	1 340
1986	8 131	2 186	5 945	2 751
1987	11 307	4 289	7 018	4 151
1988	14 314	8 929	5 385	11 107
1989	16 608	11 791	4 817	10 404
1990	29 884	24 176	5 708	13 939

Source: Goto, 1994:62.

the growth rate of the labour force declined subsequently. The industrialization process in Japan also caused increasing demands for labour. The structure of industry has been shifting away from manufacturing and towards the more labour-intensive construction and service industries. The Government started to adopt the policy of investing in labour-intensive industry overseas, but construction and services cannot be relocated.

According to Mori, the labour reform taking place in the early 1990s also provided a legal framework to introduce unskilled foreign workers in such a manner that this remains compatible with the policy principle not to admit them. "Side doors" have been deliberately furnished in the reform to introduce legal unskilled workers while keeping the "front door" firmly closed. Long-term resident status can be allowed, as migration of Nikkei (overseas Japanese) workers to Japan dated back to the beginning of the 1980s. The amended law also revised the foreign trainee system. The Technical Intern Training Program (TITP) introduced in April 1993 has opened another legal channel to employ foreign workers in unskilled or semi-skilled jobs (Mori, 1994:622-3).

Stahl (1993) further stated that since Japan refused to allow low-level manpower immigration, she has permitted labourers to enter the country under training programmes. Workers from other Asian countries are brought in for a period of time for on-the-job training. Japan's

Federation of Employers (NIKKEIREN) has argued for the establishment of more entry categories in the training programme in the technical and intellectual fields, while at the same time backing the Government's strict stand on refusing the entry of low-level manpower. In 1992, the Government diverted from its strict ban on low-level manpower imports and allowed admission of up to 100,000 workers to take jobs in private companies under two-year vocational training schemes.

Nikkei workers are heavily concentrated as labourers, especially in such industries as automobiles and electric appliances. Foreign students and clandestine workers are characterized by a comparatively wider occupational dispersion than the Nikkei. College students are distinguished from pre-college students by the comparatively greater possibility to profit from their inherent ability as language teachers and translators. Students unable to find such advantageous jobs are chiefly concentrated in unskilled manual work. Clandestine male workers are distinguished from others by the high percentage of construction workers. They mostly execute unskilled supplementary tasks at construction sites, such as carrying and preparing construction materials and cleaning buildings. Along with construction, they are also found in urban small-sized manufacturing firms and various services such as restaurants, garbage collection, and laundries. Table 8 shows the origin of foreign workers by size of firm for 1992.

Table 8. Japan: origin of foreign workers by size of firm (%)

	<i>Brazilian</i>	<i>Asian</i>	<i>Others</i>	<i>Total</i>
1-9 workers	0.0	68.54	31.54	100.0
10-19	9.3	66.44	24.34	100.0
more than 20	45.1	33.84	21.14	100.0

Source: Mori, 1994:626.

There is also wage differentiation among different foreign workers by sex and background. Table 9 shows the number of illegal foreign workers by country of origin and by occupation for 1989, differentiated by sex.

Table 9. Japan: illegal foreign workers by country of origin and by occupation, 1989

	<i>Number</i>			<i>Share (%)</i>		
	<i>Total</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>
Country						
Total	16 608	11 791	4 817	100.00	100.00	100.00
Philippines	3 740	1 289	2 451	22.52	10.93	50.88
Pakistan	3 170	3 168	2	10.09	26.87	0.04
Rep. of Korea	3 129	2 209	920	18.84	18.73	19.10
Bangladesh	2 277	2 275	2	13.71	19.29	0.04
Malaysia	1 865	1 691	174	11.23	14.34	3.61
Thailand	1 144	369	775	6.89	3.13	16.09
Taiwan Province of China	531	275	256	3.20	2.33	5.31
India	179	178	1	1.08	1.51	0.02
Other	573	337	236	3.45	2.86	4.90
Occupation						
Construction	5 653	5 581	72	34.04	47.33	1.49
Factory worker	5 091	4 696	323	30.22	39.83	6.71
Bar hostess	3 225	0	3 225	19.42	0	66.95
Unskilled help	851	575	276	5.21	4.88	5.73
Sales worker	365	227	138	2.20	1.93	2.86
Waiter/waitress	209	139	70	1.26	1.18	1.45
Domestic help	168	12	156	1.01	0.10	3.24
Cleaning worker	165	121	44	0.99	1.03	0.91
Cook	148	121	27	0.89	1.03	0.56
Other	805	319	466	4.85	2.71	10.09

Source: Goto, 1994:62-63.

Most of the male workers were working as construction workers or factory workers in small-sized establishments (47.3 and 39.8 per cent, respectively). In other words, close to 90 per cent of foreign men work in the dirty, difficult, and demanding jobs. About 77 per cent of the illegal females work as bar hostesses, unskilled help, waitresses, domestic help, etc.

2. Hong Kong and Taiwan Province of China

In the following paragraphs, Hong Kong and Taiwan Province of China are grouped together because of their close relationship with mainland China. The 20 million population of Taiwan Province of China comprises two main groups: the native Taiwanese and the mainlanders who came to the island in 1949 and after.

A rapid rate of growth in per capita income in Taiwan Province of China has been observed and believed to have been facilitated by direct foreign investment in other countries. Annual average investment was at a negligible level in the 1950s but increased to an annual average of US\$ 914 million between 1981 and 1989 (Appleyard, 1993:269).

Taiwan Province of China did not attract large numbers of foreign low-level manpower and had no policy to recruit foreign workers until the late 1980s. Since then, the high rate of economic growth has attracted illegal workers and contract workers from neighbouring Asian countries, as well as Chinese workers from other parts of Asia. However in 1990, after offering an amnesty to illegal foreign workers, the Government changed the law and granted access to foreign workers in six industries, i.e., textiles, basic metals, metal manufacturing, machinery, electronics, and construction. According to Pang (1993), in 1990 there were 47,000 overstayers from five countries – Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Sri Lanka and Thailand. This estimate excludes overseas Chinese who came in under the category of nationals or persons who entered the country illegally. It also excludes large numbers of mainland Chinese who have entered illegally in fishing boats or who are employed on board Taiwanese owned ships. According to the Council of Labour Affairs, in 1993 there were as many as 36,000 mainlanders working illegally. The police are apprehending them at a rate of 500 per month.

When the Government announced an amnesty for illegal workers already on the island in 1991, 22,000 workers offered themselves for voluntary deportation in return for a tax amnesty and the right to return legally in the future. Stalker (1994) reported that among those who registered, 40 per cent were Malaysian; 19 per cent, Filipino; 14 per cent, Indonesian; and 12 per cent, Thai. Penalties for employing illegal workers also became more severe. Employers can be fined US\$ 12,000 and jailed for three years. There was no attempt to bring workers from the mainland. Taiwanese entrepreneurs preferred direct investment in China because of the quality of workers and low wages. By 1992, Taiwanese investment in China was estimated at US\$ 4 billion, and at the end of the year the figure reached US\$ 7 billion.

In July 1992, the Parliament of Taiwan Province of China approved a Statute for Relations across the Taiwan Strait which liberalized many of the old regulations and empowered the Cabinet to import mainland workers to the island (Pang, 1993:304). However, at the end of 1993, it was reported that the number of legal foreign workers was only 150,000. Authorities estimated the illegal work force at 20,000 but it is speculated that the actual number doubles this figure. There are other problems such as illegal change of employers. When workers find higher-paying jobs, they leave the initial place of employment to work for higher-paying jobs illegally (Wickramasekara, 1994:21-22).

Hong Kong is a colony populated by immigrants, 90 per cent of whom came from China. In 1949, Hong Kong received a large influx of entrepreneurs and workers from China. The population increased from 600,000 persons in 1945 to 2.2 million by 1950 (Stalker, 1994:257). It is reported that in the 1950s immigrants from China to Hong Kong came mostly for family union or political reasons. In the 1960s, uncertain political conditions in the colony led to an outflow of people to the developed countries and Hong Kong stopped admitting visitors from China in 1974. Illegal immigrants caught at the border were repatriated. The "touch base" policy was adopted during 1970s, which allowed illegal immigrants who reached urban areas to stay while those caught at the border were repatriated. The policy was abandoned in 1980 but illegal immigrants continued to enter Hong Kong and employers continued to hire them despite stiff penalties. In 1990, over 27,000 illegal immigrants from China were arrested and deported.

In 1974, Hong Kong agreed to import foreign domestic helpers because fewer new immigrants and local workers were willing to do housework. Many Filipinas came and in 1991 there were 75,000 female workers, in contrast to 2,000 workers in 1975. A minimum wage is required to be paid to the foreign domestic helpers. In 1990, the minimum wage was HK\$ 3,000 (US\$ 385). The Foreign Domestic Helpers Service also handles disputes arising from the employment of foreign domestic helpers. In 1989, 629 claims, 1,011 consultations and 46,158 enquiries were handled by the Labour Department. There is no quota for domestic helpers. In 1988, Hong Kong allowed Vietnamese boat people who had been granted refugee status to work in Hong Kong. About 4,000 of the boat people became unskilled workers. Another 5,200 were in training programmes or working at jobs brought to the detention camps by Hong Kong firms.

Anthony Yeh (1994) reported that it is difficult to obtain accurate statistics on foreign labour in Hong Kong. Only information on applicants' occupation in the country of origin is available. These statistics do not have information on United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland or Chinese citizens. The former do not need visas to work in Hong Kong, therefore, the Immigration Department does not have information about them. Information on Chinese foreign labour is not available because of its sensitivity.

The majority of foreign workers are from the Asian region. In 1989 there were 21,996 (90.5 per cent) employment visas issued to foreign workers from Asia, followed by 1,154 (4.7 per cent) from America and 749 (3.1 per cent) from Europe. For Asia, foreign workers were dominated by those from the Philippines (74.9 per cent), followed by Thailand (8.1 per cent) and Japan (5.7 per cent). Foreign workers in Hong Kong are predominately females. They accounted for 78.6 per cent of all foreign workers in 1989. The distribution by sex varies according to region of origin (Yeh, 1994:122). Table 10 shows figures for legal immigration to Hong Kong for the period 1983-1992.

Skeldon (1994) reported that both emigration and immigration accelerated after 1987. Table 10 shows that the figures shifted from about 50,000 a year in the first half of the 1980s to 95,000 in 1992. These figures include several distinct streams of people. There is a

Table 10. Legal immigration to Hong Kong, 1983-1992

	1983	1986	1989	1992
Legal entrants from China	26 701	27 111	27 263	28 367
With employment visas	12 571	15 256	28 724	40 424
Technicians	846	1 042	1 709	2 610
Construction workers	187	45	125	11
Restaurant workers	100	114	209	422
Domestic workers	7 456	8 845	18 870	28 091
Other professional, mid-managers	1 747	2 893	4 569	4 932
Others	2 235	2 322	3 242	4 358
With residence visas	10 220	14 085	20 276	26 635
Total	49 492	56 457	76 063	95 425

Source: Skeldon, 1994:112-3.

group of legal entrants from China who move for residence in Hong Kong. This group has been fairly steady at around 27,000 to 28,000 because immigration controls at the border were tightened after October 1980. Another main component of immigrants is those admitted with employment visas. They are mostly highly skilled, with professional and managerial abilities. This category increased from about 6,000 or 7,000 in the mid-1980s to 11,000 in 1992. The majority of these are expatriates brought in by companies and institutions to carry out specific functions and they are part of an international network of skilled migration. However, Skeldon also pointed out that this category may include return migration from Canada, Australia, and the United States. The movement of persons with ex-Hong Kong residence status during the past decade has yet to be studied in detail. It is difficult to assess the real situation at this point in time.

People with residence visas include those who come to join husbands, wives, relatives, etc. They may also include returnees mentioned above.

Hong Kong's foreign labour policy has evolved in response to pressures and changing circumstances, rather than as an integral part of a long-term development strategy. Because Hong Kong will revert to Chinese rule in 1997, there are many uncertainties. Many Hong Kong entrepreneurs have emigrated to developed countries. Appleyard (1993: 269) suggested that about 50,000 mainly highly skilled and professional workers and their families are leaving Hong Kong each year. Meanwhile, local investors also put pressure on the Government to increase the employment quota. An estimate of illegal immigrants, mainly from China, is around 30,000 per year. Hong Kong capitalists have also set up factories in neighbouring countries and Chinese provinces, where wages are still low. According to Skeldon, the recent estimates are that Hong Kong manufacturers employ directly or indirectly as many as three million workers in Guangdong province, most in the Pearl River delta region, a number representing four to five times the labour force in manufacturing in Hong Kong itself (Skeldon, 1994:108).

3. Republic of Korea

The Republic of Korea is an example of a country which shifted from labour exporter to labour importer since the late 1980s. Emigration of Korean workers has been recorded since 1963 and, as has been mentioned earlier, Republic of Korea migration figures stopped in 1989. The drop in migration was because of rising wages at home.

One of the first recognized streams of international migration of Korean workers for temporary employment was believed to take place when 247 Koreans went to the Federal Republic of Germany to work under an agreement between the two Governments. From 1963 to 1974, 7,000 Korean miners were sent to the Federal Republic of Germany, and 9,000 Korean nurses migrated between 1965 and 1977. Many of them stayed in the Federal Republic of Germany or migrated to other Western countries after termination of their contract. Since 1963, 1,750,000 Korean workers have gone overseas for employment; 61.2 per cent to the Middle East (Park, 1994a:276).

Korean workers found work in Viet Nam during the 1960s. The Korean labour exports to Viet Nam laid the groundwork for massive manpower exports from the Republic of Korea to the Middle East in the 1970s, when the oil-producing countries decided to promote infrastructural development in the Persian Gulf region. Merchant marine employment was also a feature of Korean manpower contribution in the international market. The percentage of Korean contribution in this area was as high as 50 per cent in 1973, then declined to 10 per cent and increased again during the 1980s when demand for Korean labour in the Middle East diminished.

It is reported that in the peak year, 1981, 150,000 workers from the Republic of Korea were employed in the Middle East. The overseas employment helped improve the domestic labour market and brought in foreign exchange, which improved the balance of payments.

During the 1980s, Republic of Korea labour exports fell sharply when Middle East countries were faced with declining oil revenues and reduced development and infrastructure spending. Meanwhile, the Republic of Korea gross national product (GNP) increased by 210 per cent, with significant expansion in the construction and service industries (Stalker, 1994:263). Republic of Korea construction firms working in the Middle East starting to employ cheaper Filipino and Thai workers to replace Korean workers. The decreasing population growth rate contributed to wage increases. It is reported that wage increases in manufacturing averaged 20 per cent per year between 1988 and 1991. In 1980, wages for non-production workers were on average 3.9 times greater than for production workers. A Ministry of Labour survey in 1990 concluded that industry as a whole was short of 192,055 workers (4.3 per cent of the labour force) while the Korea Federation of Small Business said that in 1992 the manufacturing sector was short of 360,000 workers (7.5 per cent of the labour force).

Pang (1994b) believes that the decline in Republic of Korea labour exports, when compared with the decline in other labour-sending countries, was highly organized and supported by the Government. It took place during the period when the Republic of Korea labour market was becoming increasingly tight because of strong export-led economic growth. During the late 1980s, wage increases and monetary devaluation by the Government brought in unskilled labour from Asian countries. These included illegal migrants, overstayers, and trainees brought in by joint-venture firms. Similar to Japan, the Republic of Korea Government sought to use training programmes to help ease the labour shortage without adopting a policy to recruit unskilled workers systematically and legally.

An overall assessment of international migration in the Republic of Korea indicates that the Government has been playing an important role in the past few decades. Park notes the following patterns:

1. The Government has a policy of tight control over its borders not only because it has been technically at war with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea but also to limit the outflow of domestic capital in order to upgrade its industrial structure.
2. The Republic of Korea was one of the first countries in the Asian region to initiate and promote an active programme for the overseas employment of its nationals.
3. A policy on guestworkers can be part of the country's overall industrial policy since the import of unskilled foreign labour is closely related to the process of industrial restructuring. To some extent, the Republic of Korea has helped to speed up the process of its industrial upgrading by not opening its labour markets in a legalized manner (Park, 1994b:152).

Yet, the Republic of Korea is facing labour shortages of low-level manpower while having to cope with the unemployment of university graduates. Park reports that in the last few years, the number of illegal workers apprehended has increased significantly, from 255 in 1988 to 1,018 in 1990. These figures are believed to represent only a small portion of the actual number of undocumented foreign workers in the Republic of Korea, which is estimated to be at least 100,000. When the Government offered amnesty to undocumented foreign workers in June 1992, 66,126 foreigners reported to the authorities – 22,035 Chinese, 18,983 Filipinos, 8,950 Bangladeshis, 5,036 Nepalese and 6,112 others. At first, these self-reported workers were allowed to stay in the Republic of Korea only until 31 December 1992. Later the Government allowed them to stay for another six months because industries found it difficult to replace them with other workers.

B. SOUTH-EAST ASIA

1. Singapore

Being an island State with a population of around 3 million, Singapore relies heavily on foreign manpower, both low-level and high-level. Low-level workers are admitted under a strictly controlled guest-worker category. High-level workers are encouraged to live under a permanent settlement category. Pang (1994a) states that Singapore's policy on foreign low-level manpower has evolved over the years to meet changing economic and social objectives. From 1965 to 1968, low-level manpower imports were generally not permitted as the domestic labour supply was more than adequate. However, they were allowed in a few sectors, i.e., manufacturing, shipyards, and construction. Traditionally labour came from Malaysia but after the late 1970s, when the Malaysian economy expanded, Singapore started to import from other countries such as Bangladesh, India, Indonesia and Thailand.

The Government exerts control over the number of immigrants in two main ways. First, the Government sets a maximum percentage of foreign workers in any given firm, ranging from 40 to 70 per cent, depending on the year and on the existing proportion of skilled workers in the company. Second, a levy is put on each immigrant worker. In 1987, the Government imposed a levy of S\$ 140 a month on all new work permit holders. The levy replaced a charge, first introduced in 1982, on employers who bring in foreign workers other than Malaysians. After 1987, Malaysians are included. Since its introduction in April 1987, the levy became a highly selective instrument, varying with the type of worker and industry, and rising to take into account labour conditions and policy objectives.

Table 11 presents estimates of foreign workers in Singapore between 1983 and 1988. The figures reflect changes in Government policies which affected migration. Pang (1994a:86) observes that the number of foreign workers shrank rapidly from around 160,000 in 1984, the last year of the construction boom that began around 1980, to 108,000 by 1987. Since 1988, the foreign labour inflow has risen because of rapid employment creation in the construction and manufacturing sectors. Two factors influence the shift. They are: (1) the increase in the foreign worker levy, together with improvement in labour productivity in many sectors, has dampened the demand for foreign labour, especially in the manufacturing sector, and (2) the relocation of Singapore firms to

Table 11. Foreign workers in Singapore, 1983-1988

Year	Foreign worker levy (S\$m) (1)	Est. av. levy/ worker (S\$) (2)	Est. num of work permit holders (3) = (1) ÷ (2)	Employment pass holders (4)	Total num. of foreign workers (5) = (3) + (4)
1983	208.0	1 620	128 000	23 000	151 000
1984	221.0	1 620	136 000	24 000	160 000
1985	204.5	1 620	126 000	23 000	149 000
1986	153.0	1 620	94 000	22 000	116 000
1987	137.6	1 620	85 000	23 000	108 000
1988	218.0	2 964	135 000	26 000	161 000

Source: Pang, 1994a:88.

neighbouring Johor (Malaysia) and Batam Island (Indonesia), a process that is leading to the rapid economic integration of the three areas to form a growth triangle, has slowed down the demand for workers in Singapore.

Singapore has benefited greatly from the recruitment of skilled and unskilled foreign labour. Foreign professionals and managers have transferred skills, technology and capital while foreign low-level manpower has ensured the competitiveness of Singapore's labour-intensive manufacturing sector. Foreign maids have enabled educated female Singaporeans to enter and remain in the job market. But importation of foreign labourers has slowed the economic restructuring process and may have a long-term impact on society as a whole.

Between 1979 and 1984 labour costs rose followed by a severe economic recession during 1985 and 1986, when tens of thousands of foreign workers were laid off and repatriated. In the early 1980s the Government announced its intention to repatriate all foreign workers by 1991. However, it later became clear that Singapore's continued growth could be sustained only by supplementing its slowly-growing labour force from external sources. In 1986, the Government abandoned its repatriation plan and expanded the labour market to include Hong Kong, Macau, the Republic of Korea and Taiwan Province of China. (Appleyard, *et al.*, 1992).

The largest group of migrant workers in Singapore comprises domestic workers. In 1990 there were around 50,000 female domestic workers, of whom 60 per cent came from the Philippines and 20 per cent from Sri Lanka. Legally employed foreign workers are entitled to the same legal protection as citizen workers. There are no Government controls on their wages. Foreign workers may join unions and are entitled to all the statutory fringe and other benefits provided in labour legislation. They also have recourse to legal remedies against employers who mistreat them (Pang, 1993:308).

The number of illegal migrants is not available. In 1989 the Singapore Government enacted a new law through which illegal workers would be jailed for three months and receive three strokes of the cane. The caning penalty was later extended to any employer who employed five or more illegal workers. The Government also declared a first amnesty in March 1989 for any existing visa overstayers who were prepared to give themselves up to be repatriated. About 11,800 persons responded. However, there were disputes and petitions for some special consideration. The Government reconsidered some of the issues and granted a special consideration which the Government of Thailand requested. In July 1989, a second amnesty was announced, to end on 8 August (Pang, 1994a:82).

In 1989 Singapore-Thailand relations went sour because of the caning sentence given to a Thai worker. In 1995 a Singapore-Philippines argument arose because the Singapore Government followed up on a death sentence of a Filipina maid who was convicted of a double murder. The Philippines people believed that the Filipina was innocent and the sentence was given without a thorough investigation. The strained relationship reached a point where the possibility of termination of ambassadorial relations was discussed. Employers have been encouraged by the Minister of Home Affairs to look for workers from possible alternative sources, such as India, Myanmar, and Viet Nam (*Nation*, 22 May, 1995).

The Government also liberalized immigration rules to attract more skilled workers to compensate for the well-educated Singaporeans who emigrate each year. The new rules allowed persons with at least five "O" levels or equivalent qualifications and five years' working experience and who are earning a salary of S\$ 1,500 a month to apply for permanent residence. The Government indicated that it would give approval to about 25,000 Hong Kong residents and their families to settle permanently in Singapore over the next five to eight years. According to Pang, "response to this offer from the people of Hong Kong was widely enthusiastic. Such is the urge of many to leave the colony before 1997, or at

least to find themselves an 'insurance policy' in the form of a permanent residence offer" (Pang, 1994a:83). He also feels that if all the Hong Kong residents who are offered in principle permanent residence decide to move to Singapore, the city-State's population will increase by 100,000 over the next five to ten years. This large inflow will have profound effects on Singapore's economy and society. It will create many new jobs and enlarge Singapore's economy, but it will also increase competition and congestion costs.

2. Malaysia

Malaysia is an example of country which exports as well as imports labour force. As has been mentioned earlier, Malaysians form the largest group of foreign workers in Singapore, and they have been attracted to Japan and Taiwan Province of China also. On the other hand, Malaysia has one of Asia's highest percentages of foreign workers, 4 to 10 per cent, much higher than the estimated one per cent in Taiwan Province of China and 0.6 per cent in Japan.

Migration from and to Malaysia started during colonial rule when a shortage of labour for rubber plantations and tin mines was recognized. Labourers were imported from India and China in the form of indentured labourers. These people later settled and took Malaysian citizenship along with Malays who are Bhumiputra. Most foreign workers in Malaysia are unskilled workers in the plantation and construction sectors. The New Economic Policy launched in 1969 served to raise the incomes of the Malay rural population and rapid industrial growth has attracted a high level of urban migration, which has led to labour shortages on plantations. Between 1970 and 1990, Malaysia's per capita income more than doubled, and the preferential treatment for Bhumiputra meant that their representation in professional and technical employment increased from 47 to 62 per cent during the period (Stalker, 1994:266).

The policy to improve educational standards, together with poor wages and working conditions in the agricultural sector, led the Bhumiputra to seek higher education, which would lead to employment in urban areas. The need for unskilled workers created a labour influx from neighbouring countries. In 1990, of the 7 million labour force, 1.2 million, or 17 per cent, were foreigners. As the Government issued only 67,000 work permits, the incidence of illegal migration has been recognized. Efforts are being made to regularize migration procedures.

As the Malaysian economy is expected to grow steadily in the next decade, demand for foreign labour will continue to rise. The Government has introduced labour-saving production techniques as well as proposed a worker levy to be imposed on employers of foreign labour to ensure that workers are not used as a substitute for indigenous labour. At the same time, Malaysia's skilled and professional people are emigrating to developed countries who welcome Asian professionals. In Australia in 1991, there were an estimated 60,000 Malaysians, of whom around 60 per cent were Chinese and 40 per cent were professionals. This migration has exacerbated the problem of manpower shortage at the highly-skilled level. Table 12 provides estimates of foreign labour in major sectors in Malaysia. Most of the occupations in the sectors included in the table are unskilled and non-professional workers.

Although the need for plantation workers has been obvious in the Malaysian context, Narayanan (1992) commented that the use of a primarily unskilled immigrant workforce that brings in no additional human or physical capital will not raise overall productivity in the Malaysian economy. Even if the share of management income rises and national output increases, the share of domestic labour income would decline owing to the downward pressure on real wages caused by the presence of immigrant workers, especially if the immigrants remit their income to their home economy rather than spend it locally.

Immigrants working in the construction sector are mostly illegal Indonesian migrants. They are often linked to the main project through an intermediary headman who takes on the responsibility of recruiting them, paying them, and providing for their needs.

Table 12. Malaysia: estimated foreign labour by major sector, 1990

<i>Sector</i>	<i>Total employed</i>	<i>Per cent foreign</i>	<i>Total foreign</i>
Agric./forestry	1 837 600	30 %	551 280
Construction	426 900	70 %	298 830
Services (non-gov)	2 177 000	10 %	217 700
Manufacturing	1 290 000	3 %	38 700
Total workforce (incl. sectors not shown in table)	6 621 000	17 %	1 106 510

Source: Narayanan, 1992:137.

Reliance on migrant workers yielded benefits to the construction industry. During the recession of 1983-1986, it was reported that costs were cut by displacing foreign workers, who were paid no termination benefits. The benefits from using foreign labour accrue to other sections of society by providing jobs to labour procurers, landlords who rent out rooms, and people who patronize immigrants. However, it has also been mentioned that competition from migrant workers has raised the cost of housing and other amenities already in short supply. Land prices in these settlements have increased and housing has become more expensive.

A few migrants leave the plantations and construction sites before or after their contractual obligations cease, to disappear into the informal sector in order to reduce the risk of detection and being sent back. Some turn to work in the informal sector for additional income, as very little capital and formal education are required to work in that sector.

Demand for domestic workers has also increased with economic development and the availability of market opportunities for women. Migrant women from the Philippines and Indonesia fulfill this demand very well. Between 1985 and May 1991, 20,028 work permits were issued to Filipina women, and 2,716 permits were given to Indonesian workers. There are also illegal domestic workers.

The shortage of labour in the manufacturing sector at the unskilled level is seen in the labour-intensive segment of the electronics, textiles and non-metallic and minerals industries. Skilled workers like electrical and mechanical engineers, systems analysts, quality controllers, etc. are demanded in the electronic components and other high-value-added sectors. However, Narayanan reports that Malaysia is actively seeking to restructure its industrial base away from labour-intensive to skill-intensive and higher-value-added activities. This would ease the prevailing pressure on labour resources and enable redeployment of workers to high-productivity areas of the workforce (Narayanan, 1992:148-9).

3. Thailand

Similar to the Republic of Korea, Thailand is another country in Asia where a reverse trend in migration is being observed. Park identified 1991 as the year when the Republic of Korea became a country with net-importing of migrants. In the case of Thailand, as there is no figure for immigrant labourers, it is not as obvious. In fact, Thailand is facing the problem of how to treat illegal labour, which the country needs but has not legalized.

During the 1970s and most of the 1980s, when Thailand was in an economic recession resulting from oil crises and other factors within the world economy, international migration proved to be a welcome alternative for farmers as well as policy makers. The large volume of foreign exchange brought in by migrants helped uplift the Thai economy to a certain degree.

Table 13 provides the recorded number of Thai workers deployed abroad by country of employment from 1975 to 1993. Recognizing that official figures are usually underrecorded, Vatchareeya Thosaguan and Yongyuth Chalamwong (1991:24) noted that the number of contract workers deployed was less than 1,000 in 1975 but increased very rapidly thereafter to 108,519 in 1982 and 118,957 in 1988. The number experienced a moderate drop during the 1983-1985 period owing to the fall in oil prices resulting from over-production. In 1986, however, the number of international contract workers again increased, to 112,443.

Table 13 also indicates that the major geographical destinations of Thai workers are the Middle East and other Asian countries and areas. Pracha Vasuprasat also observed that the annual rates of growth decreased from 62 per cent for the period 1975-1980 to 24 per cent between 1980 and 1985 and 18 per cent between 1985 and 1988. The annual growth rates of migration flows during the golden period of economic growth were only 5 per cent from 1988 to 1989, and reversed to minus 50 per cent in 1990 because of the Persian Gulf war and the economic slowdown in that region. The stagnation of migration flows in 1991 could be due to the growing domestic demand for labour in Thailand and the unresolved political conflict between Thailand and Saudi Arabia following the murder of Arabian diplomats in Thailand (Vasuprasat, 1994:193-195).

The number of workers who went overseas for work equalled 137,950 persons in 1993, representing an increase of 90 per cent from the the previous year. In 1992 and 1993 the number of Thai workers migrating within the Asian region jumped by 22 per cent and 153 per cent, respectively. In 1992 and 1993 the major destinations for Thai workers were Taiwan Province of China and Brunei Darussalam and the number of workers deployed increased six-fold for the former and 16 per cent for the latter. As a result, the number of Thai workers going to other destinations fell 25 per cent. In particular, the number of workers deployed to Saudi Arabia fell by 42 per cent owing to the political conflict between Thailand and Saudi Arabia mentioned above.

Table 13. Number of Thai workers deployed abroad by country and area of employment

(persons)

Country and area	1975	1980	1985	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993
Saudi Arabia	16	9 990	42 664	66 154	61 442	9 970	5 613	8 707	5 035
Qatar		1 017	746	1 981	2 328	1 515	928	944	751
United Arab Emirates		757	839	1 158	1 048	1 072	783	1 300	1 504
Kuwait		958	1 200	3 953	3 473	1 325	3 121	3 313	1 859
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya		6 497	7 401	13 386	13 215	10 610	7 651	5 407	4 597
Subtotal Middle East	984	20 761	61 659	92 175	87 748	27 478	21 354	22 839	17 019
Malaysia			1 861	1 238	607	2 087	2 473	6 603	11 358
Singapore		723	3 387	5 262	10 692	6 464	9 488	11 337	14 171
Brunei Darussalam			2 160	6 792	8 861	8 009	8 840	12 729	14 750
Hong Kong			6	3 988	6 662	7 908	8 431	7 255	5 182
Japan			359	3 988	3 826	4 210	6 263	6 748	5 588
Taiwan Province of China				109	168	111	2 237	10 938	66 891
Subtotal Asia		723	7 945	21 747	31 536	29 492	38 477	46 883	118 600
Grand total	984	21 484	69 685	118 957	125 314	63 024	63 849	72 434	137 950
Average annual growth rates		61.67	23.53	17.83	5.34	-49.71	1.31	13.45	90.44

Source: Department of Labour, various years.

The economic growth driven by expanding exports and domestic demand following a large volume of foreign investment during the late 1980s caused labour shortages and a brain drain in almost all sectors of the economy. Demographically, the growth rate of the labour force is also declining owing to the effective family planning programmes implemented since the Third Plan. Table 14 shows the growth rates of the labour force and employed and unemployed population and indicates clearly the labour shortage evident in Thai society. As a result, there is a large number of illegal immigrants in Thailand at present. Following the pattern of out-going Thai migrants, in-coming male migrants work in construction and female migrants in service sectors. The problem of illegal female migrants is being recognized as a very serious problem because many of them are forced to become prostitutes, with very little protection in terms of personal safety and health.

Table 14. Growth rates of labour force and employed and unemployed population

<i>Year</i>	<i>Labour force</i>	<i>Employed</i>	<i>Unemployed</i>
1975-80	4.484	4.384	22.64
1980-85	3.594	2.794	37.25
1985-90	3.214	3.594	-5.78
1990-91	1.584	2.084	-2.10

Source: National Statistical Office, *Labour Force Surveys*.

Table 15 also indicates that wages for construction work are higher than wages in other occupations when daily and monthly wages are considered. The wages indicated for contractors seem to be low, which may be due to under-reporting. With increases in wages of construction workers, the tendency for migrants to return home is higher. This is evident in the decrease in the number of migrants after 1989, during the economic boom in Thailand. The differences between wages for construction workers in Thailand and wages of workers in other occupations became larger every year. In 1992, wages for construction workers were much higher than for other occupations in all types of compensation, i.e., daily, monthly, and contracted. However, as wages in some other Asian countries are still higher than in Thailand and because cultural differences and distance from home are not great, migration to other Asian countries is still attractive to many workers.

Table 15. Employment structure and wages of construction workers compared with other occupations, 1988-1992

Type of employee	Wage rate (Baht)				
	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992
Daily					
Construction	87	103	98	108	128
All occupations	79	81	89	101	109
Monthly					
Construction	4 393	4 718	5 533	6 782	9 057
All occupations	4 977	4 952	5 426	6 243	7 182
Contractor					
Construction	2 452	2 753	5 815	5 218	4 238
All occupations	2 586	2 329	2 724	2 800	3 286

Source: National Statistical Office, *Labour Force Survey*, various years.

An opposite migration trend has been observed in Thailand during the past few years, with the economic boom starting in the latter half of the 1980s. With buildings being constructed, a shortage of labour has been observed. Construction labour is now being recruited from neighbouring countries, both legally and illegally, or on a provisional basis. In addition, there is demand for female migrants in the service sector to work as housemaids and sometimes as prostitutes. This problem has become quite serious and needs to be dealt with through collaborative efforts and with the cooperation of different agencies.

Urbanization and industrialization as development concepts promoted by the Government in the Sixth and Seventh Plans resulted in the Government providing incentives to promote large-scale industries. The large firms are located in Bangkok and its vicinity while small firms are scattered in provincial cities. When Government policy switched to promote the export of Thai manufactured products, there was a boom in small-scale enterprises, especially in the form of handicrafts and other value-added products. The promotion of rural industry and cottage industry as part of the poverty eradication program was also on the agenda of the earlier development plans, but the impact was felt mostly during the late 1980s. Meanwhile, farmers in the villages chose international migration as an alternative for income generation.

Demand for labour has certainly been recognized by the Government. Contingency measures to cope with the shortage of skilled and highly skilled human resources were the promotion and encouragement of expatriate and skilled Thai professionals to return and work in Thailand. This policy brings in many foreign professionals as well as foreign firms. The Board of Investment also gives foreign investors the same rights and privileges as Thai investors, and foreign companies promoted by the Board of Investment are entitled to enjoy various incentives, including permission to bring in foreign nationals to undertake investment feasibility studies and bring in foreign technicians and experts to work in promoted firms.

At the unskilled levels, there are also reports of illegal immigrants in certain areas. In some border provinces, the Ministry of Interior allows workers from neighbouring countries to join construction firms on a provisional basis. This is with recognition of the labour shortage in the country. In the near future, Thailand will have to establish a new immigration policy to accommodate migrant workers.

IV. BRAIN DRAIN AND UNDOCUMENTED MIGRATION

A. Brain drain

This section will focus on brain drain, or high-level manpower migration, in contrast to illegal low-level manpower migration.

In many cases brain drain may be associated with foreign investment. This is seen in the case of Japan, Hong Kong and Singapore, where the Governments adopted a policy of foreign investment in order to expand the economy into the neighbouring Asian countries where wages were lower and optimum economic gain would result. In such cases, a number of high-level personnel are sent to the countries where there is investment as managers and professionals. The higher Japanese share of professional transients is also partly explained by the fact that capital- and technology-intensive industries generally require a higher percentage of professional transients than do labour intensive industries.

On the other hand, it has been noted that in case of the Republic of Korea, and Taiwan Province of China, their successful economies attracted enormous foreign capital, especially when their Governments removed restrictions on direct foreign investment. The Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) region became a recipient of direct foreign investment from Japan in the 1960s and 1970s and thereafter from the Republic of Korea and Taiwan Province of China. The economic success of the ASEAN countries in turn led to direct foreign investment from such countries as Singapore and Thailand to other countries such as Viet Nam (Appleyard *et al.*, 1992:69).

Brain drain has been observed in the case of Hong Kong because it will reunite with China in 1997. Uncertainty and insecurity were reasons for many high-level workers to move to developed countries. Emigration began to accelerate in 1987 and reached 30,000 that year, against an average of about 20,000 for the previous years of the 1980s. The number increased to 45,800 in 1988, dropped slightly to 42,000 in 1989 but rose to 62,000 in 1990. Numbers since then have fluctuated somewhat but have remained at a level of around 60,000 (Skeldon, 1994:101). However, it has been observed that some of the emigrating entrepreneurs are returning to Hong Kong when possibilities for investment in the Asian region, specifically China, look promising.

Meanwhile, the Hong Kong Government has adopted a favourable policy toward immigration of high-level manpower. Instead of sanctioning the import of low-level manpower, the colony widened the definition of skilled workers to include operatives with more than one year's experience and expanded the number of skilled workers it will import. By the end of 1991, the Government had allowed the import of 13,000 skilled workers. It also announced plans to import another 12,000, partly to ease inflationary wage pressures (Pang, 1993: 305-306).

Brain drain from Malaysia has been associated with the Government's New Economic Policy. Chinese Malaysians have emigrated to Singapore, Australia and other developed countries such as the United States of America and Canada, which are now more open to skilled workers from Asia. Stalker (1994) states that in Australia in 1991, there were an estimated 60,000 Malaysians, of whom about 60 per cent were Chinese, and 40 per cent were professionals. These emigrants leave considerable gaps behind them. A joint government and industry survey of 1990/91 found that 90 per cent of companies in Malaysia were having difficulty in recruiting and replacing professional staff, particularly in engineering, and Japanese companies could not find enough skilled workers for their factories in Malaysia.

Brain drain to Singapore results from that Government's preferential treatment of high-level manpower migration. Skilled workers have been encouraged to settle permanently, with the hope of gaining a large number of them. In 1988, about 7,000 persons became Singapore citizens, making the country a net gainer in the international flow of high-level manpower. According to Pang, skilled labour leaving Singapore is of two types. The first is temporary, involving the posting of Singaporeans abroad by local and foreign firms in Singapore. The second type is permanent, involving the emigration of Singaporean professionals to industrial countries. The size of the brain drain rose in the 1980s but has fallen since 1989. The Government has tried to attract skilled personnel from Hong Kong, while Singapore loses some of its own talent to other countries.

B. Undocumented migration

Illegal workers have been observed in most countries, but there are usually no statistics available. Different governments have different policies regarding them.

According to the United Nations, "undocumented migrants are persons who do not fulfill the requirements established by the country of destination to enter, stay or exercise an economic activity". Wickramasekara clarified further that these people usually do not register at home where it was legally required, enter the host country illegally, enter the host country legally but overstay, violate conditions of entry into the host country (seek employment with a tourist visa), or leave the employer who arranged the visa or breach the contract (Wickramasekara, 1994:25).

Available documents do not report on illegal migration to the Middle East countries. One reason may be because most of the workers were contract labourers and it was difficult to breach the contracts by leaving one work camp to join another. Another reason may be because it was not possible to blend in with the locals, as most migrant workers look physically different from the hosts. A third reason may be severe penalties imposed by the host country. Reports on clandestine workers in East Asian countries are scattered and vague. Only in Japan have the figures been made available.

In the case of Japan, the Government recognizes the need for unskilled workers. Instead of legalizing them, the Government allows multinational and local firms to use trainees and foreign university students as their work force. The number of females working in the service sector illegally is very high, especially during the last few years. Table 16 shows the number of overstayers for 1990-1994, classified by sex, and table 17 shows the number of overstayers classified by country of origin. Despite the large number, the Government has not decide to legalize them.

Table 16. Number of overstayers in Japan, 1990-1994

<i>Year</i>	<i>Males</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Total</i>
1990 July	66 851	62.8	39 646	37.2	106 497
1991 May	106 518	66.6	53 310	33.4	159 828
1991 Nov	140 700	66.7	70 199	33.3	210 899
1992 May	190 006	68.4	87 896	31.6	277 902
1992 Nov	193 059	65.9	99 732	34.1	292 791
1993 May	192 114	64.3	106 534	35.7	298 648
1993 Nov	186 146	62.7	110 605	57.3	296 751
1994 May	180 060	61.3	113 740	38.7	293 800

Source: Wickramasekara, 1995:49.

Table 17. Number of overstayers in Japan by country of origin, 1 May 1994

<i>Country or area</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>
Thailand	49 992	17.0
Republic of Korea	43 369	14.8
China	39 738	13.5
Philippines	37 544	12.8
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	20 757	7.1
Malaysia	20 313	6.9
Peru	12 918	4.4
Taiwan Province of China	7 871	2.7
Bangladesh	7 565	2.6
Pakistan	6 921	2.4
Myanmar	6 391	2.2
Others	40 421	13.8
Total	293 800	100.0

Source: Wickramasekara, 1995:49

The figures included in both tables above are estimated from computer records of arrivals and departures. According to Wickramasekara, in the late 1980s, there was a fair amount of such migration from Bangladesh and Pakistan to Japan, when there was a visa-exemption for the two countries. The revision of the law in 1990 has caused a substantial decline in flows from South Asia. Iranians moved in to fill the gap until they also were required to obtain visas. Thailand had the highest number of overstayers in 1994, followed by the Republic of Korea, China and the Philippines. Malaysians and Iranians account for 7 per cent each. It is also observed that there has been a doubling of female overstayers since 1991, with their present share at almost 40 per cent.

As has been mentioned earlier, many countries have recognized the problem of an illegal workforce and have opted to grant amnesty to those who entered prior to a certain date. After that work permits are given out. However, there may be limits and quotas on the number of work permits to be given each year. Thus, a certain number of illegal workers still exist. Table 18 gives data on amnesties for clandestine migrants. Note that Japan has not offered an amnesty.

Table 18. Clandestine migration and amnesties

<i>Country or area</i>	<i>Year of full employment</i>	<i>Year of amnesty</i>	<i>Number declared</i>
Japan	mid-1960s		
Malaysia	late 1980s	June 1992	450 000*
Republic of Korea	early 1990s	August 1992	61 126
Singapore	late 1970s	1989	11 500
Taiwan Province of China	late 1960s	1991	22 000

Source: Wickramasekara, 1995:26.

* Number registered up to 1994.

With wide publicity given to clandestine migration in East Asia, Malaysia appears to be the country with the highest number of undocumented migrants. The estimate for Malaysia is 1.2 million, while for Japan it is close to 300,000, and for the Republic of Korea and Taiwan Province of China the number is 40,000-50,000. Thailand is now becoming a country with a large number of illegal workers from Myanmar, Lao People's Democratic Republic and Cambodia, with an estimate of 200,000-300,000 (Sussangkarn, 1995:14).

Hong Kong has received a number of illegal immigrants from mainland China. Hong Kong labour unions have claimed that the Labour Import Scheme in 1989 and 1990 attracted an influx of illegal workers from China. Yeh reported that illegal workers from China faced a mandatory prison sentence of 15 months before being repatriated to China. With the increasing number of arrests of Chinese illegal workers, they constitute over thirty per cent of the prisoners in Hong Kong's jail, approximately 4,400 (Yeh, 1994:128). The number is now decreasing, as the Government allows some work permits and the growth of capital investment in some provinces of China. There are also asylum-seekers from Viet Nam who want to stay and work in Hong Kong instead of being repatriated.

In the case of Taiwan Province of China, the rate of increase in the number of illegal workers has been rapid during the past few years. Official data show that countries in South-East Asia are the main sources of migration. Migrants from Malaysia, the Philippines, Indonesia and Thailand constituted about 40,000 persons, mostly males. There is also a substantial number of overstaying overseas Chinese workers (Appleyard *et al.*, 1992:72).

V. ECONOMIC IMPACTS

The most obvious economic impact from the point of view of labour-sending countries is the remittances sent back through official channels, which are usually considered in terms of foreign exchange. Economic impact should be considered from the point of view of labour-receiving countries as well.

Athukorala (1993) believes that the impact on the balance of payments is only part of the contribution to growth and development in the labour-sending countries. Remittances are an addition not only to the receipts side of the balance of payments but also to domestic household income. Thus, government policy towards remittance mobilization has two major objectives. The first is to attract the inflows into the formal banking sector and the second is to direct the deployment of counterpart domestic currency receipts of migrant households in line with national development priorities.

Athukorala reviewed data from seven countries on formal remittances and their importance in relation to GNP and two key balance of payments variables – earnings from goods and services exports and total capital inflow. Table 19 shows migrant-worker remittances in relation to GNP and export earnings. It should be noted that the amounts of remittances recorded are those which came through formal bank channels only. Informal transfers have not been accounted for. According to figures in table 19, Pakistan shows a significant percentage of GNP coming from foreign remittances. Another pattern to observe is the increase in importance of remittances between 1977 and 1982/1983 in almost all of the countries. Despite the large size of the population and economy of India, the importance of remittances is comparable to that in Sri Lanka and the Philippines. For the Republic of Korea and Thailand, the impact of remittances on the domestic economy has been less significant because of the greater economic dynamism and rapid export expansion in these two countries.

There is an extensive parallel market in foreign currencies, which spans the labour-importing countries in the Middle East and labour-exporting countries. The role of this market is especially extensive in the case of Pakistan. But data on the money flows through this market are not available.

Table 19. Migrant-worker remittances in relation to GNP and export earnings

Country	Year	Remittances (US\$ million)	Remittances as % of	
			GNP	Exports
Bangladesh	1977	81	0.8	14.2
	1980	339	1.7	31.4
	1983	670	2.3	68.7
	1986	752	3.9	68.6
	1990	772	3.7	37.5
India	1977	610	0.6	7.8
	1980	1 867	1.2	15.1
	1983	1 957	1.1	14.4
	1985	1 757	1.0	13.2
	1988	1 764	0.8	10.2
Republic of Korea	1977	584	1.6	4.5
	1980	1 292	2.1	5.7
	1983	1 663	2.2	5.5
	1986	1 077	1.1	2.3
	1991	561	0.3	1.1
Pakistan	1977	1 156	8.4	78.9
	1980	2 215	10.3	67.1
	1983	2 737	11.3	71.9
	1986	2 279	8.4	56.7
	1990	1 848	4.8	27.4
Philippines	1977	313	1.0	5.0
	1980	421	1.2	5.3
	1983	945	2.8	11.6
	1986	681	2.3	7.9
	1991	1 500	4.0	12.0
Thailand	1977	52	1.0	1.2
	1980	366	1.2	4.3
	1983	864	2.1	9.4
	1986	798	2.1	7.9
	1991	983	1.3	3.4
Sri Lanka	1977	18	0.7	2.1
	1980	117	3.1	8.7
	1983	294	6.0	20.9
	1986	326	5.1	18.2
	1991	395	4.9	17.2

Source: Athukorala, 1993:7.

As mentioned earlier, economic impacts of remittances should be evaluated based on how they are used. It has been observed that the allocation of investment expenditure of Asian migrant households does not differ from the patterns seen in other parts of the world. There is a heavy concentration of investment in real estate. Business investments are undertaken mostly in trade, transport, and other services. Productive investment in manufacturing and agriculture is not seen often. Many returnees start a small business or buy land in a way which may not appear to be cost-effective but is more of a social symbol. The economic impact cannot be substantiated here with concrete data. However, it is undeniable that remittances sent home by migrant workers brought in foreign exchange and have helped to improve the balance of payments in many countries.

Appleyard argued that the development impacts of international migration, especially the short-term impacts, are generally well recognized by both sending and receiving governments. For countries or areas enjoying rapid rates of economic growth and rapid demographic transition (the four Asian NIEs – Hong Kong, the Republic of Korea, Singapore and Taiwan Province of China – as well as Malaysia), international migration has been utilized to facilitate the development process. He further classified the process into stages. At early stages of a country's modernization, the number of permanent settlers admitted is likely to be very low, and generally confined to former emigrants returning in their old age. As economies modernize, governments increase their intakes of permanent settlers, often nationals who emigrated as part of the brain drain during early stages of modernization. Likewise, governments do not admit contract workers during early stages of modernization because the country is likely to be experiencing high levels of unemployment and underemployment. With economic growth comes high demand for labour and, at advanced stages, skilled and semi-skilled workers are required to fill lowly paid positions vacated by local workers. The intake of professional transients is likely to be high during the second stage of modernization when governments and the private sector are seeking capital for development projects. At the last stage when a country has established its own tertiary institutions, demand for professional transients may decline (Appleyard, 1992b:254-55).

On the other hand, Abella (1993:389) sees negative economic impact. He argues that when foreign migrants move in to fill the low-status occupations which nationals refuse to take, segmentation of the labour market becomes more pronounced. Furthermore, there is an increase in emigration pressures impacting on economic growth because

of greater intensity of ethnic conflicts and rapid population growth. Another point is income differentials between the less developed countries and the industrialized countries are widened by the redirection of capital flows to the rich countries, collapse of commodity prices and the debt crisis.

In labour-receiving countries, unskilled labour has helped maintain labour-intensive industries. This may be viewed as positive even if it causes segmentation of labour market in some countries such as Japan, where labour shortage is a problem and yet some of the labour-intensive industries (construction and services) need to be located within the country. An alternative is to adopt a policy of direct capital investment in foreign countries where unskilled labour is available. Direct foreign investment by rich countries will not only help stop the labour flow but help improve economic conditions of the poor countries as well.

VI. SOCIAL IMPACTS

It is not easy at assess the social impacts of migration on families and communities. The United Nations University and the International Labour Organisation supported a seven-country study of returnees (Gunatilleke, 1991). The study revealed that there has been both positive and negative social impacts on families and communities. In several countries a high proportion of the migrants who returned remained unemployed and were not able to use their skills productively. In the countries where the economy was expanding and where employment was being generated at a satisfactory rate, the re-absorption of the migrants into the workforce and the appropriate use of their productive capacities posed no serious problem.

Impacts on families differ according to cultural background. In comparing reports from seven countries on personal and social adjustment that faced the migrants and their families, Gunatilleke summarizes that there was no set pattern. For example, in Pakistan the patriarchal nature of the family and the structure of authority was easily disturbed when the chief householder migrated abroad. The impact on spouses and children was very different from the impact of the migration on families in Thailand, Sri Lanka, or the Philippines, where family structures are different and where the allocation of responsibilities between spouses, as well as inter-generational adjustments, are more easily managed. The average migrant and his family have been able to adjust to the separation without serious human cost. Many migrants reported that the migration resulted in a heightened awareness of the value of family relationships and that family members experienced a stronger need for closer communication with children and spouse.

It is not clear how many of the returned migrants used the skills gained abroad to obtain suitable work once they returned home. Data collected by the author in Thailand indicated that in 1985 (prior to the economic boom) 80 per cent of the respondents learned technical skills and appreciated the experience gained during the period of migration. About 50 per cent felt that they had acquired management skills at the same time. The experience seemed to have encouraged a small proportion of the migrants to embark on various forms of self-employment and private enterprises. The data indicated that the returnees valued the experiences differently depending on the village conditions and opportunities being made available to them.

It is undeniable that migration of individuals separates them from their families. The impact on families has been recognized. There have been reports of broken homes and divorces. But in general, most migrants feel that they prefer to travel to work abroad to earn more income than to stay poor. Research reports also show that for unsuccessful cases, the negative impacts on the individuals and their families have been severe.

Social impacts are seen more clearly when female migrants are involved. Table 20 shows estimates of the number of overseas female migrants from Indonesia, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, and Thailand. These four countries have large numbers of female migrant workers abroad.

The table is incomplete in many aspects. However, based on data available, high percentages of Indonesian and Sri Lankan women migrated to work as domestic workers. Filipinas are known for their skills as singers and entertainers. Thai women migrants usually do not sing but enter the entertainment sector as bar girls, restaurant attendants, etc. However, they prefer to work in factories and rarely become domestic workers in foreign lands.

Domestic workers are sometimes considered inferior and of low status. There are reports of complaints of physical abuse, harassment and maltreatment including being locked up, receiving low salary, and working long hours. Some countries require the employers to pay a levy to the government to guarantee payment and whereabouts of the workers. The domestic workers are made to sign a contract containing adverse terms and conditions. After arrival, many of them have their passports impounded to prevent them from breaching the contracts with their employers. Many have fled and become illegal workers anyway. There are also cases of problems of cultural adjustment.

For entertainers, similar problems have been reported. Gulati (1993) mentioned that women workers going as entertainers are not even classified as workers. They are classified as guest workers in Japan, the country which accounts for 90 per cent or more of the employment of overseas entertainment workers. The 1980s was the beginning of Asian women being brought to Japan to work in the sex and entertainment industry. The Japanese Embassy in the Philippines introduced a new visa category called entertainer's visa. Others came to Japan on a tourist visa and overstayed. Among entertainers there are problems of illegal migrants. Many of them, therefore, do not complain. But problems faced by entertainers include income-related exploitation by crime syndicates, both in the home country and in Japan, and by entertainment establishment owners; as well as sexual abuse.

Table 20. Estimated overseas migration of female workers from selected countries

Country & year	Total outflows, number	Female compo- nent (%)	% of women migrants as		Per capita GNP (US\$)	Exports as % of GDP	Female literacy (%)	Female work parti- cipa- tion	Unemployment	
			Domestic worker	Enter- tainers					Men (%)	Women (%)
Indonesia (1988)	63 998	77.5	98.4	Nil	440	25	65 (1985)	37 (1990)	NA	NA
Philippines (1987)	382 229	47.2	59.2	17.5	630	25	85 (1990)	36 (1990)	7.1 (1990)	9.8
Sri Lanka (1990)	75 408	65.0	73.2	Nil	420	26	83	29	10.8 (1985, 86)	20.8
Thailand (1988)	118 600	12.7	N.A.	N.A.	513	34	88 (1990)	68 (1990)	2.6 (1990)	3.6

Source: Gulati, 1993:8.

Studies of entertainers report not only problems connected with prostitution and drug abuse, but also poor working conditions, long working hours and violence, as well as loneliness and linguistic and cultural isolation. Problems of loneliness and isolation are felt by those who work in clubs located in isolated areas.

The case of illegal female workers in Japan is one of the most serious problems identified in international migration studies. Appleyard *et al.* (1992:65) state that legal recourse is exceedingly difficult because the women are purposely ill-informed concerning the identity of their recruiters and even their bosses. The root causes of the problem are fourfold: (1) the basic violation of the human rights of illegal workers even by those in authority – rather than being seen as persons whose rights have been violated, they are seen as criminals; (2) discrimination against foreigners in a basically xenophobic society; (3) discrimination against Asians who hold lower status in Japan than other foreigners; and (4) discrimination against females in general, which is a reflection of the low status of women in Japanese society. News from Japan regarding illegal Thai and Filipina migrants causes embarrassment to the Governments concerned. Poor working conditions and exploitation of women in the entertainment enterprises are perpetrated by organized crime, which also trafficks women illegally from Thailand and the Philippines to Japan. There are crime syndicates operating in countries of origin and destination. Despite the efforts made by the governments, they have not been able to control the situation.

Among male migrants in general, research and news reports indicate that working conditions are stressful and living conditions seem to be adequate but not comfortable. Yet most workers do not complain, partly because they do not know their rights and partly because of the fear of repatriation. Cases of sudden death syndrome among Thai workers in Singapore have been reported often. Doctors have not been able to identify the cause, but one possibility is stress.

VII. CONCLUSION AND POLICY PERSPECTIVES

Several policy issues have been mentioned in this paper. However, discussion must take place from two separate perspectives, i.e., those of sending and those of receiving countries. Nevertheless, one has to keep in mind that labour demand is a global phenomenon and countries from the North and the South must make agreements to cooperate for the best solution for both worlds. Global development has to be the final objective. The issue of labour migration is very complex; each government has to establish its macro-level national policies concerning migrants as individuals while maintaining proper international relations with counterpart countries. The following issues are summarized from the previous discussion and are offered for consideration in future international exchanges regarding labour migration.

International labour migration has to be viewed as a global issue involving many players, i.e., the sending country, the receiving country, the migrants, the employers, etc. However, the policies to be identified and adopted need to have overall sustainable development as a final goal.

Receiving countries should identify their roles in the global economic and social spheres taking into consideration their economic advantages and showing responsibility in assisting developing countries. At the moment, a direct foreign investment policy, where by capital is sent to developing countries to promote labour-intensive industries, is seen as one potential alternative for receiving countries. Another alternative is for rich countries to adopt a foreign aid strategy targeted toward the development of industrial capacity through the provision of physical and human infrastructure (Stahl, 1993).

Countries of emigration which have adopted policies promoting international migration have to maximize the return flow of remittances while maintaining the responsibility to protect their citizens from unfair labour practices while abroad. Policy measures towards productive use of remittances in labour-sending countries have been attempted by many, some more successful than others. Most of the measures include small-scale business promotion and entrepreneurship development. More innovative measures need to be identified to pool resources, both monetary and human, to develop more-value-added products. Commercial banks may be requested to assist in providing a special type of low-interest loan for this purpose.

Labour laws in the receiving countries usually do not fully cover the rights of the foreign labour force. If international labour migration is to be with us for another two decades or more, policies regarding working conditions and workers rights in the receiving countries should be established in an international arena. Policies regarding suitable working conditions and social security protection for foreign migrant workers should be established through bilateral and multilateral agreements between receiving and sending countries prior to migration.

Policies regarding illegal immigration need to be re-examined. Abella believes that a broad range of initiatives is called for to promote the economic development of third world countries rather than simply imposing tighter border controls. At the level of immigration policy, coordination and cooperation between governments of sending and receiving states will go a long way in dealing effectively with many of the current problems to which migration gives rise. The cooperation should include: (1) agreements on basic rights for guest workers and the protection of these rights; (2) agreements on measures for dealing with illegal migration; (3) assistance to facilitate cultural and social adaptation of migrants; (4) joint efforts at expanding the role of migration in human resource development; and (5) assistance to facilitate remittances (Abella, 1993:389).

Special attention needs to be given to undesirable social consequences regarding female entertainers and domestic workers. A regional policy dialogue should be set up to discuss four themes, i.e., (1) international migration, labour policies and socio-economic impact; (2) mechanisms of recruitment, migration and re-integration, (3) worker protection, and labour legislation and enforcement in sending and receiving countries with special reference to domestic workers; and (4) interventions and action programmes to assist workers facing difficulty.

More concrete policies are needed to help improve the work status of international migrants. Cooperation between the sending and receiving countries will lead to more desirable labour exchange relations where workers' rights and employers' benefits are incorporated for mutual improvement of overall labour relations.

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